

AGENDA ITEM III B

PROPOSED NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SOWELA TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ASSOCIATE OF GENERAL STUDIES (AGS)

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sowela campus of the Louisiana Technical College (LTC) was re-designated a Technical/Community College by the Board of Regents on June 26, 2003. The College serves the southwestern parishes of Calcasieu, Cameron, Jeff Davis, Allen and Beauregard.

STAFF SUMMARY

1. Curriculum

Students pursuing this degree organize their coursework around general education core requirements (29 hrs.). Students then select 12 hours of courses in a concentration area (Arts & Humanities or Natural Science/Mathematics). The remaining 21 hours are selected from enrichment blocks, with a minimum of 6 hours from two enrichment blocks other than the area of concentration.

Block 1: Arts and Humanities (Art, Communications, Literature, History)

Block 2: Natural Science/Mathematics (Mathematics, Statistics, Biology, Environmental Science, Physical Science)

Block 3: Social and Behavioral Sciences (Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Government, Geography)

Course titles and descriptions are consistent with those of other similar colleges. Total credits required: 62.

2. Need

The program is an essential offering of any community college. Its flexibility allows for a diversity of educational experiences without having to create separate stand-alone programs; it is also designed to serve students who will attend STCC as a result of the new admission standards established in the Board of Regents Master Plan. The staff further notes that students must be enrolled in a degree program to be eligible to receive financial aid; the flexibility of this program makes it easier for the College to designate students as such.

3. Students

The following enrollment and graduation figures mainly reflect the expected effects of the Board of Regents' framework of selective admissions. Students who are enrolled in the College and taking general education courses without seeking a degree may also be interested in the program. Some students are expected to transfer before graduation. Graduation rates are projected at approximately 50% of the continuing students.

Enrollment	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
New Students	40	17	11	14	16
Continuing		30	28	37	44
Graduates	0	15	14	18	22

4. Faculty

All faculty who will participate in the proposed program have credentials consistent with SACS-COC principles of accreditation. (Faculty credentials are on file in the Office of Academic Affairs.). To initiate this program, however, the College projects a need to hire four additional full-time faculty. For Fall 2005, the College plans to hire an additional instructor in Mathematics; for Spring 2006, an additional instructor in History will be hired; additional instructors in Physical Science and Biological Science will be needed for Fall 2006. The proposal indicates that part-time faculty members will be needed to teach history and biology, with the positions becoming full-time in 2006. Part-time instructors will also be needed to teach in the areas of fine arts and social/behavioral sciences.

5. Library

The College is in the process of expanding its library, staff and services to meet its new mission as a Technical Community College and to be in compliance with SACS-COC standards. Expansion of Sowela's initial holdings will provide adequate resources for initiation of the proposed program. It is anticipated that a minimum of \$800,000 will be needed over the next five years to fully develop the library's core collections and remain up to date, as required by SACS-COC. \$ 175,000 is projected for acquisitions specific to the General Studies program.

In addition to library holdings, faculty and students have access to the Lether E Frazer Memorial Library at McNeese State University, located approximately six miles from the Sowela campus, through the "Friends of the Library" program for a minimal fee of \$15 per year. Additionally, Sowela is a member of the American Library Association and subscribes to the Louisiana Online University Information System (LOUIS) at Louisiana State University. Through this service, faculty and students have both campus and remote access to approximately thirty online databases, totaling more than 12,000 titles. Faculty and students also have access to extensive library collections and electronic resources at the thirteen locations of the Calcasieu Parish Public Library.

6. Facilities and Equipment

Six classrooms are primarily used for instruction of general education courses, with another classroom partially available. Several general education classes are taught by Tech Prep instructors in temporary buildings provided by the local school system.

Sowela does not currently have dedicated science laboratories. In order to meet the requirements for offering chemistry, physics and biology, at least two labs must be established within existing buildings. Space has been identified in the computer center for a combination chemistry/physics laboratory. A biology lab could be placed in the electro-mechanical building. Construction/renovation costs of \$45,000 are projected for the two labs. Estimated costs for equipment and furniture are \$40,000 for the chemistry/physics lab and \$60,000 for the biology lab.

Office space and work areas to accommodate an increased number of full-time and part-time instructors will be needed as they are hired.

7. Administration

The Department of Academic Studies was established several years ago at Sowela to provide an administrative structure for developing, scheduling and staffing the general education courses. As an interdisciplinary extension of these courses, the Associate of General Studies program will be administered through the Department; Sowela does not anticipate any change in its present administrative structure if the program is implemented.

8. Accreditation

This program is not eligible for any specific programmatic accreditation.

9. Budget

The College projects a need for four additional full-time instructors as well as funds for establishment of laboratories and indicates that it will request additional state appropriations. Cost and revenue figures are as follows. **The figures below represent new (not recurring) costs and revenues for a given year:**

<u>Expenses</u>	Year One AY 05-06	Year Two AY 06-07	Year Three AY 07-08	Year Four AY 08-09
Faculty	(2FTE) \$ 96,000	(2FTE) \$ 96,000		
Library	50,000	50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000
Supplies/Services	3,000	4,000		
Lab Facil/Equip	145,000			
TOTAL	\$ 294,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000

The staff notes that tuition/fees at Sowela are currently (AY 2004-05) \$468/semester for a full time student, which includes \$384 for tuition plus \$84 Academic Excellence Fee. The College was recently permitted by the Louisiana Legislature to increase tuition over the next several years. For AY 2005-06, the projected first year of implementation of the proposed program, tuition/fees will be \$588/semester for a full time student. For AY 2006-07, tuition/fees will be \$708/semester for a full time student. While it is possible that tuition will be increased additionally after AY 07-08, calculations shown below reflect the maximum tuition/fee rate authorized at this time.

<u>Revenues</u>	Year One AY 05-06	Year Two AY 06-07	Year Three AY 07-08	Year Four AY 08-09
State	\$ 246,960	\$ 125,928	\$ 34,424	\$ 5,176
Tuition, Fees*	47,040	24,072	15,576	19,824
TOTAL	\$ 294,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000

*Reflects revenue from new students only

If enrollment projections materialize, the program should become self-sustaining about five years after implementation.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The curriculum is consistent with established norms for degrees of this type. Need for the program exists. Student interest is likely. Faculty are currently inadequate in number to initiate the program, but the College has provided a reasonable plan for acquiring needed faculty. Library resources are developing; adequate resources will be available for students by the time the program is implemented. Facilities are adequate. Administrative plans are reasonable. Program accreditation is not an issue. The budget is reasonable if tuition levels rise as projected and the College is successful in gathering external funds for library support.

Given that the College is in the process of hiring faculty and developing a library, the staff recommends conditional approval with stipulations for required reports.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant conditional approval of the proposed Associate of General Studies program (CIP 24.0102) at Sowela Technical Community College, effective immediately, with three stipulations:

- 1. By March 15, 2005, the College shall inform the Commissioner of Higher Education of the status of its application to SACS/CoC for institutional candidacy;***
- 2. By August 1, 2005, the College shall submit a report to the Commissioner of Higher Education which describes the College's progress toward hiring four qualified full-time faculty for the program and developing its library to meet SACS-COC standards;***
- 3. Upon receipt of the report required in #2 above, the Board of Regents shall consider whether additional progress reports will be needed.***